Flame Buster?

HUDSON OAKS — Dairy Queen, which was gutted by flames the day following Labor Day, is targeted for re-opening in mid-December. The store will be constructed in the style of Dairy Queen's most recently approved concept. It could possibly be the first of its kind in the nation, besides the test concept in Minnesota.

"We could have rebuilt it back like it was, but we felt that the area deserved a new state-of-the-art Dairy Queen," said Joe Anthony, regional director for Bedford-based Chapman Company, parent company of the Hudson Oaks DQ as well as both Weatherford stores. "The Weatherford area has been very good to us."

Construction details are still on the burner for replacement of the store. A date for the beginning of its reconstruction has not been set but Anthony said he expects it to begin "very soon."

"I would be very disappointed if we are not opened by December," Anthony said. "Instead of putting it back the way it was, it will be state-of-the-art. The new image is very bright, with a lot of splashy colors. It's going to be a beautiful store. We're very proud of the stores out there and the community. It deserves this new store."

The cause of the fire has yet to be officially determined, Anthony said.

"As best we know, a fryer caught on fire — but all we can do is guess," He said. "We prefer to let the investigators figure that out."

Employees of the Hudson Oaks DQ were transferred to other Chapman Dairy Queens until the new store can be unveiled.

"We wanted to be sure our employees were taken care of," Anthony said. "We have a number of good, loyal long-time employees at that store."

Chapman is the Minneapolis-based firm's largest Dairy Queen franchisee in the world with 86 stores.

There are currently over 800 Dairy Queens in Texas.